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Beyond mobility infrastructure: Two examples of authorial metro stations as spaces of urban transformation

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PASSAGES

ARCHITECTURE FOR FLOWING AND CONNECTING SPACES

Raffaella Cavallaro
Nicolò Chierichetti (eds.)

International Conference
September 24–26th, 2025
Politecnico di Milano

Book of Abstracts

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Raffaella Cavallaro
Nicolò Chierichetti

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Intersection

OVER, UNDER, ARCHITECTURE

SESSION CHAIR:

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Assistant Professor, DAStU

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"Piazza Municipio metro station, Naples". Photo by the author (2024)

BEYOND MOBILITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Two examples of authorial metro stations as spaces of urban transformation

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INTERSECTION
Over, Under, Architecture

In contemporary practice, metro stations are increasingly expanding beyond their transportation function to become multifunctional public spaces. They are conceived as complex nodes that serve as catalysts for urban regeneration in line with sustainable planning principles. Different international projects exemplify this trend, showcasing how architects design mobility spaces as public places for interaction, in dialogue with the local context.

One example is the Piazza Municipio metro station in Naples, designed by Álvaro Siza and Eduardo Souto de Moura. The project was driven by the need to incorporate a large-scale infrastructure within the historic urban fabric and to provide a pedestrian connection with the port. Excavations during construction revealed findings dating from the Hellenistic-Roman period to contemporary times. In line with the systemic strategy of combining architecture, art and archaeology within the stations, the architects designed the new mezzanine level by intersecting it with the segmented heritage context, shaping a new context-sensitive public space.

Taking a different perspective and considering the mobility space in connection with the intangible dimension of the place, the project by Benedetta Tagliabue (EMBT Architects) for the Clichy-Montfermeil metro station within the Paris Grand Express transport system is also relevant. The project is articulated as a driver of urban regeneration through a new architectural interpretation of the area. In line with recent developments in participatory urban processes, the architects organised a workshop with the local multiethnic communities to collaboratively define the appearance and characterisation of the new urban space with patterns inspired by their cultural expressions. The research explores how architects designed these new spaces as functional and spatial configurations of urban regeneration, intersecting them with the heritage and identity of the place.

Urban transformation, heritage, interchange, architectural-practices, metro-station

Addie, J. P. D., Glass, M. R., & Nelles, J. (2024). *Infrastructural Times. Temporality and the Making of Global Urban Worlds*. Bristol University Press.

Pucci, P., & Colleoni, M. (2016). *Understanding Mobilities for Designing Contemporary Cities*. Springer International

Dell'Aira, P. V., Grimaldi, A., Guarini, P., & Lambertucci, F. (2015). *Sottosuoli urbani: La progettazione della città che scende*. Macerata: Quodlibet.

« Ceci n'est pas une conférence sur la mobilité »

As infrastructures of movement often prioritize technical efficiency, they risk neglecting the qualitative and experiential dimensions of space, an oversight that architectural thinking is distinctively positioned to address. Architecture offers a special perspective to address this gap, particularly in light of SDG 09-Industry, Innovation and Infrastructures and SDG 11-Sustainable Cities and Communities, and in reference to the principles of the EAAE Charter.

By engaging with mobility through a transversal approach, the conference explores how architectural design can contribute to reimagining spaces to overcome functionalist engineering limitations, also considering the ecological, climate and social impacts of mobility spaces as something more than mere built objects.

Through the examination of design methodologies and prototype case studies, the conference attempts to unveil the potential of architectural design and research tools to enrich unconventional discussions about mobility in urban and peri-urban contexts, its spatial configurations and experiential qualities. Although mobility is intended as a framework, the discourse will focus on the spaces above, below, in-between, and to the sides of the ordinary boundaries of architectures of flow, as well as on the spaces of new forms of movement. The conference «Passages. Architecture for Flowing and Connecting Spaces» invited contributions which critically address the role of Architecture in the Shaping the spaces of mobility, and in their interference, around the sessions of "Intersection", "Collateral" and "Evolution".

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